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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to identify and define the nature and characteristics of culture. The paper begins with a brief historical perspective on the introduction of the word culture into the English language and the development of its meaning for anthropology. A brief introduction to the definitions of culture is also presented. A review of the major categories of definitions of culture, which comprises the bulk of the paper, is then presented. The categories are: enumeratively descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, and genetic. For each category, definitions of culture by various individuals are quoted and comments on these definitions by the author are presented. A synthesis presents an account of the state of knowledge. The paper concludes with an analysis and conclusions which lead the reader on to further consideration of the idea of culture and its development into a concept and the formulation of a "theory of culture." A selected bibliography is included. (RM)

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MAJOR DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

by

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"Most anthropologists would agree that recognition of the nature and importance of culture is the single most important insight that has marked the development of the study of man."

Pertti J. Pelto

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PART I: Introduction and Statement of the Research Effort

Culture exists at any point in time as recognizable products of organized human life; yet culture is more than content. Culture is an abstraction, a continuum which is in a state of constant change. The shaping of that change by human society demonstrates an interrelationship between a society and a culture.

Culture, if accepted as a universal concept, is autonomous. That is: it exists independently from society. However, "culture and society imply each other, for without living together men cannot create a culture or way of life, and without a way of life they cannot live together." (Kneller, 1966, p. 1)

As a conceptual model, culture provides universal configurations or patterns of culture by which aspects of human society are identifiable and are shown to be interrelated.

> All cultures are said to resemble one another because men everywhere are driven to action by an identical set of inborn impulses which direct their behavior along parallel lines. Until two decades ago these common impulses were widely regarded as instincts.
>
> (Herskovits, 1945, p. 126)

The 1920s also saw a change in how differences between cultures were viewed. Until that time differences were attributed to racial or genetic traits. A major significance of the idea of culture is the understanding and accurate identification of the true source of differences between cultures. Differences in culture are "differences in learned patterns of social behavior,"

not genetic differences. (Pelto, 1965, p. 67) This fact not only supplants the belief in inferiority or superiority of different cultures due to racial or genetic heritage, it also creates an awareness that human cultural behavior can be universally described by generalized patterns of behavior.

Instinct theory was invalidated due to the progress of the behavioral sciences and the realization that learning and habit are important in the creation of human social behavior. Observation and study of many societies revealed that "human behavior shows infinite variation from society to society and perpetual change in any one society as it exists through time." (Murdock, 1945, p. 126) Cultural behavior was thus explained as the product of learning and habit, the content of which was determined by each society relative to its values and needs.

The recognition and acceptance of the idea of culture as an important insight into the development of the study of man was not commonly accepted until sixty to seventy years ago. Those questions which have arisen around this idea have called for clarification through definition. This has created the need to study both the parts and the whole of culture and to consider the nature of culture and its implications for the study of human societies.

The focus of many anthropologists has been the enumeration of the components of culture for purposes of description and definition; others are more concerned with the examination of the configurations of culture. The latter group hopes to identify a universal scheme or quality to culture which will not only have value

in cross-cultural studies but also in the development of a scientific theory of culture.

The study of a particular society will be most successful if conducted through a method of cultural analysis:

> A part of each culture is a system of identifying and interpreting the things and events which constitute experience. In fact without the culturally induced perspective, experience is meaningless.
> (Kimball, 1965, p. 262)

This culturally induced perspective is that of the members of a society and comes about only through the interactions of individuals within this system.

This system of community life (society) is "one in which individuals form a continuous and regulatory association for their mutual benefit and protection." (Funk and Wagnalls, 1966) It is out of this context of mutual benefit and protection that meanings, values, mores, roles, ideologies, and symbols are constructed and both regulate and create patterns of behavior. Behavior is directed and guided through the interrelations of the group and is learned through the internalizing of expectations directed toward one by the group.

To understand a society we can best study and learn about it through the approach of the anthropologist. Anthropology is the science of human alternatives. It is the systematic study of "humanly" different ways of being. It is "the living activities and the thoughts of members of society which must be analyzed in order to fully elicit the culture of any society." (Morrish, 1976, p. 57)

Through problem-finding and -solving as viewed in the context of "sociocultural" processes, we can begin to understand the whole, the pattern of culture.

> To study a complex whole requires that cultural acquisition is observed from birth to death. We not only learn how to live, but also how to die. Acquisition of culture is the learning in all activities of life.
>
> (Roberts and Akinsanya, 1976, p. 2)

This whole of culture is comprised of parts in a unique arrangement and interrelation and is in a constant state of dynamic activity which brings about new entities by the process we call culture or social change. To define this complex whole, we must analyze not only its parts but also its configurations as the content may change though the configuration may remain the same or only slightly become altered. "The importance of the study of the whole configuration as over against the continued analysis of its parts is stressed in field after field of modern science." (Himes, 1968, p. 46) The analysis of culture thus has important implications for the sciences of human behavior.

Identifying its nature and characteristics is necessary before one can define and understand the idea of culture and its role in society. Such is the three-fold purpose of this research: identification, definition, and understanding for the purposes of conclusion.

Following a brief historical perspective on the introduction of the word culture into the English language (and the development of its meaning for anthropology) and an introduction to the

definitions, the major categories of definitions of culture will be reviewed with representative examples listed under each.

The synthesis will present an account of the state of the knowledge as interpreted by this researcher. The analysis and conclusions will extend the scope of the research by leading the reader on to further consideration of the idea of culture and its development into a concept and the formulation of a "Theory of Culture."

PART II: A Brief History of the Word Culture

Tylor was the first to establish in english the word culture with its modern anthropological meaning. An interesting note is that this term suffered what we today call "culture lag." Though first used in print by Tylor in 1871, "culture" was not accepted until fifty years later, at which time it was included in dictionaries of the English language.

The generic sense of the word culture is that of cultivation or of becoming cultured. This is associated with the older meaning of civilization, or of becoming civilized, and both refer to the process as that which is undertaken by an individual.

"Culture" is a derivative of the German word "Kultur." "Kultur" indicated the distinctive "higher" values of enlightenment of a society. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, pp. 66-67)

"Kultur" was also a label applied to an episode in German thought (approximately 1836 to the 1950s) which placed great emphasis on distinguishing between the terms culture and civilization as separate concepts in order to achieve large abstractions of meaning. Humboldt, Schaeffle, Barth, Kant, Hegel, Schiller, Weber, Spengler, Oppenheimer, Thurnwald, all contributed to these expressions of ideas about culture and civilization.

The separation of the words from an interchangeable definition gave each a more precise meaning. Culture was defined as "the sway

of man over nature." Civilization was defined as "the sway of man over himself." (Ibid., pp. 25-30)

A different set of meanings was applied to the words by Toennies (also German). He viewed culture as consisting of the folk society, aspects of which included religion, art, and custom. Civilization he associated with a state organization in which was embodied the law and the sciences of human beings.

From the 1860s to the 1940s Arnold, Powys, Patten, Burns, and Lowell, all speaking and writing in english, took an humanistic point of view toward culture. They believed culture to be an expression of individual personality rather than based on the dead weight of custom. Spontaneity was to be preferred to formality in definition. However, this view overlooked the intellectual significance of cultural differences. (Ibid., pp. 54-56)

The humanistic sense of the word culture (the ideal of human perfection) clashed with the anthropological sense: description or enumeration of content, the historical influence of traditional heritage, and the complex of ways and expressions of the life of a nation. The humanists believed in a known perfection, an absolute, which knowledge they "inherited" as a hierarchy of values; the anthropologists made out of the original concept of values a descriptive category. (Ibid., p. 60)

To the anthropologist, values play an important role in describing a culture. This attitude toward values is relativistic due to the attempt to study values in the social context and to determine their range, variety, constancy, and interrelations.

In 1931 the American sociologist R.M. MacIver contrasted, as had the Germans, civilization and culture. He equated civilization with means and culture with ends. Means he perceived as the "apparatus of living" and ends as "the expressions of our life." (MacIver as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, pp. 21-22) He associates the realm of values with culture as it is the expression of our nature. Civilization as viewed by MacIver is that which man devises in an attempt to control his life; and culture MacIver views as the antithesis of civilization.

Americans have been congenial to the culture idea; perhaps due to their heterogeneous cultural background because of which they have been forced, through interractions or conflict to recognize the variety of social traditions in the world. At one point in American sociology (example, MacIver) the two terms civilization and culture were contrasted but they have now come to be non-differentiated and are not used as contrastive terms. They have become instead, synonomous though culture is the more frequently used term.

PART III: Introduction to the Definitions

Ideas or concepts are at first always general and are explained by reference to those factors which caused them to arise. This context from which they are derived must be studied and clarified as "it is only by means of a progressive analysis of the material of observation that they can be made clear and can find a significant and consistent meaning." (Freud, 1946, cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 79) This statement, find a significant and consistent meaning, is an important consideration for this researcher and especially so for anthropologists as a "lack of clarity and precision is largely the responsibility of anthropology." (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 69)

Definitions of culture have not yet been constructed which meet the criteria of a scientific theory. Faults in formulation range from "a point of view which is all too often left unstated," (Ibid., p. 79); to attempts to work out a "generalizing" idea; to "preoccupation with gathering, ordering, and classifying data." (Ibid., p. 69). A broad definition, yet one which includes all the significant aspects of the "superorganic" life of human groups, has been attempted. Looking for all the concrete data about which to form a concept of culture, anthropologists have yet failed to achieve an acceptable concept from which a fully systematic scientific theory of man, society, and culture can be formulated.

Tradition and heritage were major components of the first

definitions of culture (1871-1930), which were descriptive and enumerative, or custom oriented. Heritage was considered as reception and preservation rather than accumulation. Post 1935-1940, the emphasis shifted from study of the "transmission of traditional heritage" to study of the "mechanics and operation" of culture.

Psychology had a great influence on this shifting of interest as research involved the study of the mechanics of interaction between an individual or groups and culture, and the operations of an individual or groups within the cultural configuration of the society to which each belonged. Some of the terms used to label these phenomena best describe this psychological point of view: acquired, non-genetic, learning, behavior, response, stimulus. The 1940-1960 period therefore saw "the study of cultural structures, as opposed to content, progress markedly." (Ibid., p. 358)

The content, the familiar ideas, the bulk of published cultural anthropology, consists of description. This diversity of examples has fortunately become conceptualized in a more refined manner due to the study of structures. The concept of culture has, as a result, been developing not so much through new ideas as through new configurations of familiar ideas. This development will be evidenced in the groups of definitions in PART IV and the practical implications of a scientific culture theory will be explored in PART VI.

Culture, as described by the definitions which follow, is presently a generalized explanatory category. Within this category of culture are six general features: integration, historicity,

uniformities, causality, significance and values, and values and relativity. These features are included within the definitions, under the appropriate group emphasis, and are those common features which will aid this researcher in the comparisons, contrasts, and conclusions of the comments which follow each group; and in the evaluation of the significance and consistency of meaning in the available data. The state of the knowledge, as represented by the definition section, and the analysis of the groups of definitions will influence the researcher's consideration of a universal theory of culture.

PART IV: Definitions and Comment

My presentation of definitions of culture follows the format used by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) in their classic monograph, Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions. The six categories into which they place definitions of culture allow one not only to acquire a sense of the historical anthropological developments in the definitions of culture but also to interpret the influences of developments in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. This organization into groups by differing emphases makes the sources of the components more clearly discernable.

The range of emphasis offers more than enumeration of criteria for categories. Each emphasis allows the separation of the larger number of definitions into a smaller number of groups which can be studied more easily. Each group can further be compressed as the similarity of definitions within the group permits consolidation and reduction. The result is an abridged group of definitions selected as representative of the clearest thinking and emphasis and which best meet the criteria of the category.

This structure reduces also the confusion created by the multiple definitions of some "authors" (anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, historians, psychologists) who have stated various positions which reflect several types of anthropological emphasis. The brief statements which follow are taken out of the larger context

of the author's thinking but, it is hoped, suffer little from misinterpretation as they meet criteria for categories of definition, not for full definitions of a concept.

The reader should also note that overlap of categories occurs. That some definitions contain components which could satisfy two or more categories is to be expected. The growth toward a definition of culture has shown characteristics which demonstrate that the idea of culture may become a "universally" applicable concept. Therefore, linkages between definitions not only exist, but also demonstrate that aspects of the concept of culture can be validated by both consensus of expert opinion and empirical observation.

Through this critical review, one comes to understand the "evolution" of or "process" by which an idea is developed into a concept. Concept formation grows out of increased comprehension and greater accuracy at definition. As inconsistencies and weaknesses of definition are overcome, the logical flow toward the ultimate goal of achieving for the concept the status of THEORY can begin. The ultimate goal of anthropologists is to construct an acceptable "Theory of Culture."

GROUPS OF DEFINITIONS:

GROUP A. Enumeratively Descriptive
(emphasis on Enumeration of Content)

GROUP B. Historical
(emphasis on Tradition or Social Heritage)

GROUP C. Normative
(emphasis on Rule or Way; on Ideals or Values plus Behavior)

GROUP D. Psychological
(emphasis on Adjustment, on Culture as a Problem-Solving Device; on Learning; on Habit)

GROUP E. Structural
(emphasis on the Patterning or Organization of Culture)

GROUP F. Genetic
(emphasis on Culture as a Product or Artifact; on Ideas; on Symbols)

(Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 21)

GROUP A: DESCRIPTIVE

Emphasis on Enumeration of Content

1. Tylor, 1871:1.

   "Culture, or civilization,...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

2. Wissler, 1920:3.

   "...all social activities in the broadest sense, such as language, marriage, property system, etiquette, industries, art, etc...."

3. Benedict, 1931:806.

   "...that complex whole which includes all the habits acquired by man as a member of society."

4. Boas, 1930:79.

   "Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the products of human activities as determined by these habits."

5. Linton, 1936:288.

   "...the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior which the members of that society have acquired through instruction or imitation and which they share to a greater or less degree."

6. Malinowski, 1944:36.

   "It (culture) obviously is the integral whole consisting of implements and consumers' goods, of constitutional characters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs."

7. Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1945:82.

   "Culture is that complex whole which includes artifacts, beliefs, art, all the other habits acquired by man as a member of society, and all products of human activity as

determined by these habits."

1945:96.

"...culture in general as a descriptive concept means the accumulated treasury of human creation: books, paintings, buildings, and the like; the knowledge of ways of adjusting to our surroundings, both human and physical; language, customs, and systems of etiquette, ethics, religion, and morals that have been built up through the ages."

8. Kroeber, 1948:8-9.

"...the mass of learned and transmitted motor reactions, habits, techniques, ideas, and values---and the behavior they induce---is what constitutes culture. Culture is the special and exclusive product of men, and is their distinctive quality in the cosmos...Culture...is at one and the same time the totality of products of social men, and a tremendous force affecting all human beings, socially and individually."

9. Herskovits, 1948:154.

"Culture...refers to that part of the total setting (of human existence) which includes the material objects of human manufacture, techniques, social orientations, points of view, and sanctioned ends that are the immediate conditioning factors underlying behavior."

1948:625.

"...culture is essentially a construct that describes the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, sanctions, values, and goals that mark the way of life of any people. That is, though a culture may be treated by the student as capable of objective description, in the final analysis it comprises the things that people have, the things they do, and what they think."

COMMENT:

Great historical significance must be placed on the definition of culture by Tylor. His was the first formal, or explicit, definition. It was not followed by another for thirty-two years, and then by only six in the period to 1919.

Having become familiar with many other definitions of culture, including those in all the groups in this section (PART IV), I have come to view Tylor's definition as so classic, so "definitive," that all succeeding definitions appear as derivatives of this initial statement. Certainly many are more refined, or express a differing point of view or emphasis, but his is that which achieved a precision and excellence which has made it timeless.

The following criticism of Tylor's definition will be interesting in view of the fact that though I have attributed the characteristic of timelessness to his statement, he did not perceive the timeless character of culture as a configuration. Tylor did not view culture as something perpetually moving in time. He felt that the complex whole of traditional heritage was static, not in a state of constant change of content or rearrangement of the configuration which anthropologists today recognize.

Wissler tends to be very general in his definition. Though it lacks the impact of Tylor's, it is still a "first class" definition. His reference to social activities shows the influence of the psychological and sociological emphasis on the study of the interactions of individuals and their culture. He also explored what he termed "universal culture patterns," believing these activities (behavior) to have a pattern which could be found as common to all cultures. He had pioneering ideas but unfortunately never pushed them to fruition.

Benedict reiterates the "complex whole" aspect of Tylor's definition with a particularly interesting emphasis on "acquiring"

the habits which make up this whole. She perceived patterns of culture, or configurations, and distinguished between group and individual orientations as types of culture patterns. I found her delineations of conformist and non-conformist interaction as too distinct and imprecise. As descriptors of specific types of cultures they would be difficult to reintegrate with her concept of the "complex whole."

Boas expanded and refined Tylor's definition and in turn influenced many others. Wissler, Benedict, Linton, Kroeber, (also John Dewey) were all students of Boas. One can see that Tylor's influence was perpetuated through the work of Boas. However, he contributed little to clarifying the concept and his "culture area" view limited the progress toward a universal definition as he awarded the geographical area of a society too great an importance and influence on the development of a particular culture. Interactions of environment, race, language, and culture became his main interest, rather than the continued study of the nature and specific properties of culture.

Linton's definitions throughout this section will show the greatest fluctuation as he first sees culture as response and behavior; then as a way of life, a collection of ideas and habits; and then as a configuration of learned behavior. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 305) He best exemplifies the process of growth as it has taken place in the development of ideas about culture.

Malinowski started the "functional" approach to the study of cultures "in order to explain each facet of a culture in terms of

its contribution to the whole at a given moment." (Kneller, 1966, p. 2) He was concerned with the understanding of the nature of cultural phenomena, with "the actual causative elements and resultant effects of a culture upon the particular society under consideration." (Morrish, 1976, p. 56) His statements ring of the stimulus-response (conditioning) theory of behavioral psychology.

Malinowski believed "form is always determined by function" (Malinowski, 1944, p. 149) and that function means "always the satisfaction of a need." (Ibid., p. 159) He felt the link between form and function in symbolism to be artificial and achieved only by the process of conditioning.

Malinowski's "Functional Theory" has much to offer the student of culture but I find it too broad in its scope and too narrow in its interpretation. I interpret his theory as advocating attempts to discover all functions of all aspects of a society and to then relegate these functions to listings within an interpretive format of human needs.

Kluckhohn and Kelly meet the criteria of a descriptive definition by picturing culture as a comprehensive whole and by enumerating the aspects of its content, but do not explicitly refer to learning---though "learning theory" had already made an impact on anthropology by the 1930s. The transmission of culture through learning certainly has a more than important, a vital role in the perpetuation of a culture.

Kroeber's definition is one I find most adequate. He views culture as a level of the superorganic life of humankind. He

appropriately describes it in abstract terms, as it is an abstraction, and therefore avoids the confusion created in other definitions by the listing, ordering, and classifying of concrete phenomena.

Kroeber further builds his view of society as superorganic by supporting a pluralistic view between cultures: one which would increase understanding and improve relations, rather than one which would demand a complete consensus between cultures.

Kroeber's fine definition meets the standards set by Bernard:

> The precision of a definition does not usually consist in the accuracy of a detailed description, but rather in that of a representative conceptualized inclusive formula which serves as a base for control operations. (Bernard, 1941, p. 501)

Herskovits comes the closest to describing an important property of culture---that it has organization as well as content. The word construct draws him close to making a link between organization and configuration but he pulls back and does not achieve it when he implies that culture cannot be objectively described.

GROUP B: HISTORICAL

Emphasis on Tradition or Social Heritage

1. Park and Burgess, 1921:72.

   "The culture of a group is the sum total and organization of the social heritages which have acquired a social meaning because of racial temperament and of the historical life of the group."

2. Sapir, 1921:221.

   "...culture, that is...the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives..."

3. Myres, 1927:16.

   "...'culture' is not a state or condition only, but a process; as in agriculture or horticulture we mean not the condition of the land but the whole round of the farmer's year, and all that he does in it; 'culture,' then, is what remains of men's past, working on their present, to shape their future."

4. Malinowski, 1931:621.

   "This social heritage is the key concept of cultural anthropology. It is usually called culture...Culture comprises inherited artifacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits, and values."

5. Linton. 1936:78.

   "...the social heredity is called culture. As a general term, culture means the total social heredity of mankind, while as a specific term a culture means a particular strain of social heredity."

6. Mead, 1937:17.

   "Culture means the whole complex of traditional behavior which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation. A culture is less precise. It can mean the forms of traditional behavior which are characteristic of a given society, or of a group of societies, or of a certain race, or of a certain area, or of a certain period of time."

7. Kluckhohn, 1942:2.

"Culture consists in those abstracted elements of action and reaction which may be traced to the influence of one or more strains of social heredity."

1949a:17.

"By 'culture' anthropology means the total life way of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group."

8. Kroeber, 1948:253.

"...culture might be defined as all the activities and non-physiological products of human personalities that are not automatically reflex or instinctive. That in turn means, in biological and physiological parlance, that culture consists of conditioned or learned activities (plus the manufactured results of these); and the idea of learning brings us back again to what is socially transmitted, what is received from tradition, what is acquired by man as a member of societies. So perhaps how it comes to be is really more distinctive of culture than what it is."

COMMENT:

Park and Burgess are two of the first to state that culture has organization as well as content. One must note, though, that this organization is in a transmission mode context. They also use a "racial temperament" reference though other statements in their work lead me to believe that they perceived this racial temperament as a product of factors other than biological heritage alone.

Sapir relies heavily on the "socially inherited elements in the life of man, material and spiritual." (Sapir, 1949, pp. 308-9) His reference to "assemblage" seems to refer to that group of products of mind and hand which were shaped by the interaction of

persons in the past; but the role of humans in the context of the present is questioned as he states in this definition that the inherited assemblage "determines the texture of our lives."

Myres' is a very important definition as he describes the role of process on the past, in the present, and in the shaping of the future. Tradition, to Myres, is a part of the process. It is both the activities by which receipt takes place and also that which is given and accepted. Culture is perceived by Myres as not in a static state or condition but in a state of dynamic activity.

Malinowski's definition appears to be dictated by his functional theory of and approach toward the study of culture. He enumerates aspects of social heritage and this heavy emphasis on inheritance does not allow for an active role on the part of humankind. Humans, as described by Malinowski, are passive carriers of cultural tradition and as creatures of their situation, are not recognized as having the roles of creators and manipulators of culture.

Linton and Mead are the first to make a distinction between "culture" and "a culture". This has important theoretical implications as it makes a refinement of the concept of culture possible. That people have a biological heritage and a social heritage, which comes from membership in a group with a history of its own, is recognized by both. They emphasize that different characteristics of particular societal organizations exist in "a culture" but that "culture" refers to the complex totality of the human race. These statements help provide a base for the development of a theory of

culture.

Kluckhohn defines culture in the abstract terms acceptable to so many anthropologists. It is unfortunate that these two definitions refer less specifically to the importance of configurations of cultural activities (though he does make such references in other definitions). His references to "action and reaction" and "acquires" indicate his acceptance of the importance of the active role of humans within the culture of their society. He also implies that an anthropological approach to observation and the analyzation of such behavior and interactions aids the study of cultures.

Kroeber attempts precision in his definition of culture but is best analyzed in the way that, in his definition, he recommends the reader view culture: "how it comes to be is really more distinctive. . .than what it is." Kroeber's explanation comes about through his consideration of the biological and physiological aspects of human behavior, and is formulated around learning theory. He excludes reflexive and instinctive actions, stressing that those activities which involve transmission, reception, and acquisition are those which best demonstrate the dynamic activity of culture. Kroeber believes it is processes which are more important to comprehend than the identification of the products of culture.

GROUP C: NORMATIVE

Emphasis on Rule or Way; on Ideals or Values plus Behavior

1. Wissler, 1929:15,341.

   "The mode of life followed by the community or the tribe is regarded as a culture...(It) includes all standardized social procedures...a tribal culture is...the aggregate of standardized beliefs and procedures followed by the tribe."

2. Linton, 1945:203.

   "The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation."

3. Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1945:97.

   "By culture we mean all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and nonrational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men."

4. Herskovits, 1948:29.

   "A culture is the way of life of a people; while a society is the organized aggregate of individuals who follow a given way of life. In still simpler terms a society is composed of people; the way they behave is their culture."

5. Bidney, 1946:535.

   "An integral or holistic concept of culture comprises the acquired or cultivated behavior, feeling, and thought of individuals within a society as well as the patterns or forms of intellectual, social, and artistic ideals which human societies have professed historically."

6. Sorokin, 1947:313.

   (Superorganic Universe: the social aspect of the superorganic universe is made up of the interacting individuals, of the forms of interaction, of unorganized and organized groups, and of the interindividual and intergroup relationships...) The cultural aspect of the superorganic universe consists of the meanings, values, norms, their interaction and relationship, their integrated and unintegrated groups (systems and congeries) as they are

objectified through overt actions and other vehicles in the empirical sociocultural universe."

COMMENT:

Wissler's definition typifies the crystalization of the concept of culture around the idea of custom (mode of life). His work sets the pattern for other anthropologists by raising the custom concept to a generalization: standardization. This generalization implies: "a.) common or shared patterns; b.) sanctions for failure to follow the rules; c.) a manner, a 'how' of behaving; d.) social 'blueprints' for action." (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 98)

The use of "mode of life followed" is more neutral than the descriptive reference "artificial rules" and also seems a more natural phenomenon. This use also shows a definite emphasis on clarification of the "complex whole" by use of the descriptions "mode of life"; "system"; or "organization".

Linton also stresses way but includes ideas and habits as behavior or ways which are learned, shared, and transmitted. This allows one to infer that the unity of the group is based on the dynamic activities, or foci, of the normative ideas on behavior in cultural process.

Kluckhohn and Kelly stress historically created designs: "those historically created selective processes which channel men's reactions both to internal and to external stimuli." (Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1945, p. 84) This statement is an important historical reference as it is formed by and is a function of its time period. They, as did others of that time segment, believed that the relation

of behavior to ideals or values is not conceptually intrinsic but is historical. Kluckhohn and Kelly felt that each participant in historically defined cultural situations acted within this channeling process and only slightly retailored the definition of a situation to meet colloquial needs.

Herskovits attempts a simplistic explanation. He dissociates society and culture (many others consider and use the terms interchangeably) equating society with individuals and culture with the behavior of individuals. These terms are too simplistic as they do not allow for variance in behavior from the "given" way of life: variance which would be considered non-cultural behavior. Considered as a distinction rather than as a dissociation, the interrelation of society and culture becomes more clear.

Bidney emphasizes cultivation, and in particular self-cultivation. He considers the individual as an organism; therefore culture cannot refer to only the mental aspects of human nature or behavior. This integrative concept not only affects the view of the individual but is vital to the comprehension of the totality of the society to which the individual belongs. Because the intellectual, artistic, and social ideals are those not only professed by the members of a society but are those ideals to which members strive to conform (Bidney, 1942, p. 452) self-cultivation can occur only when the total, integrated organism of society is understood.

Sorokin's definition is very broad and idealistic, and is not easily comprehendable. However, he does touch on important

points of interaction, systems, and actions as vehicles of an "empirical sociocultural universe." I think this emphasis on an empirical universe could have important implications for the development of a culture theory but needs to be explained and defined more precisely and realistically.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn make some valid points for the exclusion of "behavior" from culture. They would exclude it on the grounds as follow:

1. There is also human behavior not determined by culture, so that behavior as such cannot be used as a differentiating criterion of culture.

2. Culture being basically a form or pattern or design or way, it is an abstraction from concrete human behavior, but is not itself behavior.
(Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 305)

They refer to behavior as a pre-condition of culture. Culture is that which resides in "human individuals from whose behavior it is inferred or formulated." (Ibid.) My conclusion is that they recognize rational and irrational behavior and warn the researchers of culture to avoid inclusion, in statements and conclusions about culture, of behavior which deviates from the norm.

GROUP D: PSYCHOLOGICAL

Emphasis on Adjustment, on Culture as a Problem-Solving Device; on Learning; on Habit

1. Small, 1905:344-45.

   " 'Culture'...is the total equipment of technique, mechanical, mental, and moral, by use of which the people of a given period try to attain their ends...'culture' consists of the means by which men promote their individual or social ends."

2. Sumner and Keller, 1927:46-47.

   "The sum of men's adjustments to their life-condition is their culture, or civilization. These adjustments...are attained only through the combined action of variation, selection, and transmission."

3. Panunzio, 1939:106.

   "...culture is a man-made or superorganic order, self-generating and dynamic in its operation, a pattern-creating order, objective, humanly useful, cumulative, and self-perpetuating. It is the complex whole of the systems of concepts and usages, organizations, skills, and instruments by means of which mankind deals with physical, biological, and human nature in the satisfaction of its needs."

4. Ford, 1942:555,557.

   "Culture consists of traditional ways of solving problems... Culture...is composed of responses which have been accepted because they have met with success; in brief, culture consists of learned problem-solutions."

5. Kluckhohn and Leighton, 1946:xviii-xix.

   "There are certain recurrent and inevitable human problems, and the ways in which man can meet them are limited by his biological equipment and by certain facts of the external world. But to most problems there are a variety of possible solutions. Any culture consists of the set of habitual and traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are characteristic of the ways a particular society meets its problems at a particular point in time."

6. Wissler, 1916:195.

"Cultural phenomena are conceived of as including all the activities of man acquired by learning...Cultural phenomena may, therefore, be defined as the acquired activity complexes of human groups."

7. Benedict, 1947:13.

"...culture is the sociological term for learned behavior, behavior which in man is not given at birth, which is not determined by his germ cells...but must be learned anew from grown people by each new generation."

8. Murdock, 1941:141.

"...culture, the traditional patterns of action which constitute a major portion of the established habits with which an individual enters any social situation."

9. Tozzer, n.d.(but pre-1930); (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.115)

"Culture is the rationalization of habit."

COMMENT:

The psychological influence on this group is immediately made clear by Small's definition. "People trying to attain ends" emphasizes the necessity to examine both human needs and the means by which the ends are achieved to satisfy those needs, both of which are psychoanalytic approaches.

Sumner and Keller stress the point of "adjustment" and their definition, at least indirectly, influences most of the others in this group. Conceptually "rule or way" is related to this group and culture, to Sumner and Keller, embraces both folkways (habits and customs which come from efforts to satisfy needs) and mores (values the group regards as essential for its welfare). Sumner has set a tradition for attempts to synthesize anthropology,

sociology, and psychology (specifically learning theory) into a unified science of human behavior.

Panunzio also associates culture with the satisfaction of human needs. For him, the complex whole of the systems of culture are the means by which this is achieved. Reference to culture as pattern-creating, objective, self-perpetuating, and superorganic do not logically follow his description of culture as a man-made order. I must assume he is considering culture as existing in the conceptual sense of an independent entity and that human beings interract with it only to satisfy their own ends.

Ford comes close to Malinowski's assumption in which he states "that culture is solely the result of response to physiological drives and needs as modified by acquired drives." (as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 109) A problem for consideration is that cultures create problems as well as solve them and create needs as well as provide means of fulfilling them. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 109)

Kluckhohn and Leighton provide a fine statement which attempts to explain rather than to describe culture. Their comment substantiates the assertion by anthropologists and psychologists that the basic processes of learning are the same among all groups. What is learned, from whom, and when it occurs, varies only according to culture. Another point of distinction is that "while cultural behavior is always learned behavior, not all learned behavior is cultural; conversely, learning is only one of a number of differentia of culture." (Ibid., p. 115)

Wissler again pioneers (as he did in the "rule or way" definition) a new definition of culture. His 1916 statement stresses the acquisition of "activity complexes of human groups." The impact of this emphasis on social learning has been verified by preceeding definitions and is that emphasis upon which will be built the explanations of the definitions which follow (Benedict and Murdock).

Benedict supports the non-genetic emphasis of the time. The acceptance of intelligence and behavior as not racially determined had great significance for all researchers of human societies. Genetic inheritance was not considered a part of or influence on the formation of culture. I like her emphasis on "learned anew" as this allows for the realization that culture not only stems from and expresses the basic values of society, but that it can be an adaptive and adjustive instrument of values.

Murdock's "established habits" differ from the term "custom" (he uses "traditional patterns of action") because he centers on the individual rather than the group. I interpret his intent in his description of culture as referring to the equipping of an individual with a reperatoire of acceptable habits with which entrance into any social situation is assured because the patterns of behavior will be similar. I conclude that his major emphasis on the study of the acquisition of habits by the individual and on the study of why those habits are retained or changed is such to enable one to more accurately analyze the trends of a culture. A problem with this approach would arise if he considered acquisition of habits apart from their societal context. Habits can be neutral

as the group is never affectively indifferent to its customs.

I enjoy Tozzer's comment for its off-hand approach to defining culture and I add it here to lighten the tone set by the others.

GROUP E: STRUCTURAL

Emphasis on the Patterning or Organization of Culture

1. Willey, 1929:207.

   "A culture is a system of interrelated and interdependent habit patterns of response."

2. Linton, 1945:5,32.

   "a) ...and cultures are, in the last analysis, nothing more than the organized repetitive responses of a society's members.
   b) A culture is the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society."

3. Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1945:98.

   "A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group."

4. Turney-High, 1949:5.

   "Culture is the working and integrated summation of the non-instinctive activities of human beings. It is the functioning, patterned totality of group-accepted and -transmitted inventions, material and non-material."

COMMENT:

The definitions of this group do not attempt to enumerate the aspects of culture but to show that the aspects have an organized interrelation. These statements also show that the concept "culture" is an abstraction. As a conceptual model, it "must be based on and interpret behavior but. . .is not behavior itself." (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 120)

> Parts do not cause a whole but they comprise a whole, not necessarily in the sense of being perfectly integrated but in the sense of being separable only by abstraction.
> (Ibid., p. 123)

Willey's statement of "interrelated and interdependent habit patterns of response" points out that forms may persist while the content changes or is unaltered but organized into new structures (patterns). This supports the view that parts of the whole must not be abstracted and studied only for purposes of understanding the complex whole. Understanding the relationship and dependence of parts to each other is possible but the point of view and the understanding of the interpreter must be taken into consideration before predicting the value of the assumptions or conclusions.

Organization and configuration are important components of Linton's definition. He views the measuring of dimensions of cultural aspects as not so important to discover as the organization (or pattern) of relations between the aspects. The exactness of the relationships is more important than the dimensions. (Ibid., p. 123)

Kluckhohn and Kelly encompass both explicit and implicit "designs for living" in their analysis of culture. They describe explicit as consisting of "regularities in word and deed which may be generalized from evidence of ear or eye." Implicit is an abstraction from which anthropologists "infer least common denominators which seem to underlie a multiplicity of cultural contents." (Ibid., p. 121)

Functioning is of major importance as a descriptor of culture for Turney-High. He views the integration of activities of human beings along the patterned totality as responsible for this progress. For such functioning to continue, it must be accepted that structural

relations are characterized by relatively fixed relations between parts. The parts must continue to have these linkages or the structure of activities will cease to be integrated and workable---will no longer function.

These definitions are a great advance in the realization that there is much more to culture than artifacts, linguistic texts, and atomized traits. This group of definitions offers structure, patterning,and organization as configurations which are amenable to objective study. (Ibid., p. 122)

GROUP F: GENETIC

Emphasis on Culture as a Product or Artifact; on Ideas; on Symbols

1. Willey, 1927:500.

   "...that part of the environment which man has himself created and to which he must adjust himself."

2. Sorokin, 1937:I:3.

   "In the broadest sense (culture) may mean the sum total of everything which is created or modified by the conscious or unconscious activity of two or more individuals interacting with one another or conditioning one another's behavior."

3. Reuter, 1939:191.

   "The term culture is used to signify the sum-total of human creations, the organized result of human experience up to the present time. Culture includes all that man has made in the form of tools, weapons, shelter, and other material goods, and processes, all that he has elaborated in the way of attitudes and beliefs, ideas and judgments, codes, and institutions, arts and sciences, philosophy and social organization. Culture also includes the interrelations among these and other aspects of human as distinct from animal life. Everything, material and immaterial, created by man, in the process of living, comes within the concept of culture."

4. Kluckhohn, 1949:17.

   "...culture may be regarded as that part of the environment that is the creation of man."

   1951:86.

   "Culture designates those aspects of the total human environment, tangible and intangible, that have been created by men."

5. Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1945:97.

   "...a summation of all the ideas for standardized types of behavior."

6. Wissler, 1916:197.

   "...a culture is a definite association complex of ideas."

7. Ford, 1949:38.

"...culture may be briefly defined as a system of ideas that passes from individual to individual by means of symbolic action, verbal instruction, or imitation."

8. Taylor, 1948:109-10.

(resummary of Taylor's summary by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 131)

"---Culture consists of the increments (of mental constructs) which have accrued to individual minds after birth. When the increments of enough minds are sufficiently alike, we speak of a culture.
---Culture traits are manifested by cultural agents through the medium of vehicles, as in Sorokin's terms. These agents are human beings; the vehicles are 'objectifications of culture'- observable behavior and its results.
---Culture processes are the dynamic factors involving culture traits. They do not constitute culture but comprise the relationship between culture traits.
---Culture, consisting of mental constructs, is not directly observable; it can be studied solely through the objectifications in behavior and results of behavior.
---Culture traits are ascertainable only by inference and only as approximations. It is for this reason that context is of such tremendous importance in all culture studies."

COMMENT:

Genetic definitions are labelled as such because they focus on the questions of how culture came to be and what made it possible or caused it to exist. Rather than emphasizing the transmission process of the traditional heritage group, it centers on result or product or symbol. A problem to consider, especially as many anthropologists consider culture an abstraction, is whether or not the effect of the culture is in the mind or in the product (or environment).

Willey places culture in that environment created by humankind. Mental adjustment therefore takes place in relation to that creation and to the understanding of the products or symbols of the cultural

environment.

Sorokin also places emphasis on what happens, as culture, when individuals interact or are conditioned by others within their cultural setting. This view does allow for the acceptance of culture as constantly undergoing change through modifications in interactions and in conditioning.

Reuter enumerates aspects of human experience which meet the criteria for creations, both material and non-material, as cultural components. I find it hard to accept such a definition as it could not possibly be exhaustive of all necessary inclusions or embrace the whole of culture by such enumeration. Also, two camps of contention exist which argue the possibility of the existence of a "material" culture. One point of view is to accept its existence and the other is to reject its existence, believing that culture is the idea behind the artifact. I share the second point of view.

Kluckhohn also views culture as that part of the environment created by humankind and accepts both the material and non-material aspects of it. Kluckhohn and Kelly distinguish culture as a summation of ideas but clarify the particular ideas which they perceive as most important to the culture concept as those which promote "standardized types of behavior." This specifies which of the non-material aspects (ideas) and the material aspects (products or symbols of behavior) Kluckhohn enumerates in his definition.

Wissler's short reference to ideas fulfills all the criteria for this group. He views ideas as products of human thought. His description of their formation (association complex of ideas)

indicates that the discovery and use of symbols influenced both how and what has made it possible for cultures to exist.

Ford's use of "symbolic action, verbal instruction, or imitation" makes the central feature of his definition the method of communication. It is this universally held ability of humans to use symbols to communicate which also helps raise the culture concept away from considerations of "organic" or "racial" differences. The use of symbolism is characteristic of all cultures and is the truly differentiating aspect of "human" and "beast."

Taylor summarizes culture and attempts to identify its components without losing the sense of the whole. He stresses the importance of context in cultural studies and follows his own advice with this definition. The statements flow into each other, overlap, and show, by the relation of each aspect, how culture is a dynamic organization for which we have yet to discover enough of its empirical components to form the desired "Theory of Culture."

PART V: Synthesis

The bulk of published cultural anthropology consists of description. The definitions in the groups of the preceeding section support, by example, this assertion. Such a diversity of enumerative descriptions of culture has created confusion in both the understanding of the definitions and the formulation of a precise, clear concept of culture.

An innovative approach---the study of cultural structures as opposed to content---has aided the growth of the culture concept. The shift of emphasis began with the acceptance of culture as a complex, accumulative, dynamic process rather than culture as the transmission, reception, and preservation of traditional heritage. Present emphasis places value on the study of the mechanics and operations---processes---of culture.

The six categories of definition provide an historical sense in addition to an understanding of the developments in anthropology, sociology, and psychology which so greatly influenced the definitions of the culture idea. One can discern the reasons behind the choice of components by each source and can evaluate the overwhelming significance of those earliest definitions which have remained functional to the present.

This historical angle also provides a filter through which the statements have been sifted and through which their use as

classic or universal definitions has been tested against the criteria of precision, excellence, and relevance. The clarification of the concept of culture will only come about as the elements of universal cultural patterns are defined and the nature and specific properties of culture are understood. This clarification will then allow culture to become recognized as a complex totality, a theory of the human race.

Culture, concretely, is created by individuals operating as a group; is internalized by those individuals; and becomes a part of their environment through the medium of other individuals and of cultural products. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 367) Culture is therefore not merely transmitted, it is made. It is historical in that it is related to the past but it is also functional as it is related to the present. "It is a configuration of the total social inheritance and way of life." (Morrish, 1976, p. 59)

Culture is produced, but it is also subject to change. "Cultures are. . .controlled by and (control) themselves through information flow." (Harkins in Roberts & Akinsanya, 1976, intro., p. 13) This flow thus subjects culture to design and redesign. Though culture is the product of a group, it "is not necessarily tied throughout time to a particular society." (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 367) This statement illustrates the reason why culture must be regarded as an autonomous system or category and why it can be treated, abstractly, from both personalities and societies. (Ibid.)

We perceive a momentum quality to cultural systems as "the performance of a culturally patterned activity appears to carry with it

implications for its own change which is by no means altogether random." (Ibid., p. 374) Earlier, historical forms of culture usually predetermine the direction of culture change.

Environmental press and individual variability do not create specific patterns of behavior, though aspects of both may encourage the channeling of particular practices into the mainstream of behavior. Whether or not these practices become cultural behavior is usually determined by their success in fulfilling a social function.

Culture is thus present in individuals and shapes their behavior and situations in ways not determined by biology or environment. "Culture is an intervening variable between human 'organism' and 'environment'." (Ibid., p. 368) Kroeber and Kluckhohn also state that if we can isolate this variable for purposes of study of human behavior, in a cultural context, we may not only be able to make more behavior intelligible, we may also "make possible predictions about behavior in particular areas." (Ibid., p. 375)

We must resort to generalizing at this point as the reader must not be left with the impression that culture can be reduced to behavior or to the investigation of behavior. Culture is abstract, behavior is concrete.

> Part of culture consists in norms for or standards of behavior. Still another consists in ideologies justifying or rationalizing certain selected ways of behavior. Finally, every culture includes broad general principles of selectivity and ordering (of behavior)."
> (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 375)

The characteristics of culture formulated as follow should further clarify that the term behavior is a generalization of

something concrete and is not as such culture:

Characteristics of Culture

1. is socially created; rather than instinctive or biologically determined.

2. is socially shared; members tend to do the same things in the same ways.

3. is learned; through association with others through a process of learning carried out in group situations.

4. is gratifying; to the people who practice it.

5. is integrated; specific cultural patterns tend to be linked together harmoniously because they work together in fulfilling social functions.

(Himes, 1968, pp. 74-74)

We have listed characteristics of culture with their definitions and must now turn to consideration of offering a clear definition and discussion of the concept of culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn best state reasons in support of this discussion and definition as follow:

> The sense given the concept is a matter of considerable practical importance now that culture theory underlies much psychiatric therapy as well as the handling of minority problems, dependent peoples, and even some approaches in the field of international relations.
> (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 7)

> The idea of culture, in the technical anthropological sense. . .in explanatory importance and in generality of application. . .is comparable to such categories as gravity in physics, disease in medicine, evolution in biology."
> (Ibid., p. 3)

Kroeber and Kluckhohn urge the refinement of definitions into concepts and concepts into a corpus of theory, as concepts are dead-ended unless they are bound together in a testable theory. Unless

this testable theory comes about anthropologists will not be able to develop "explicit conceptual instruments" by which to gauge anthropological research. (Ibid., p. 70)

Anthropology has too many definitions and too little theory. We can enumerate the conceptual elements but as yet have no theory of culture as even an important concept does not constitute a theory; for example, "gravity" is merely a concept in the theory of gravitation. (Ibid., p. 357)

The central idea of culture is now formulated as follows:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.
> (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 357)

This statement represents the consensus opinions of Kroeber and Kluckhohn and is guided also by their extensive research into the topic. We have only a formulation of the <u>idea</u> because it is premature to offer a formal definition of the concept.

This formula of the idea of culture will be modified and enlarged as we become more aware of the interrelations of cultural forms and of variability and the individual. Both of these aspects will be clarified as we learn more about "implicit" culture---that of which we are often unaware, that which is unstated. (Ibid.) A conceptual model of culture will develop only as a result of further investigation into these areas.

PART VI: Analysis and Conclusions

Anthropologists do not yet have a "Theory of Culture." They do have a diversity of definitions and a formulated "Idea of Culture."

Anthropologists must, however, be careful to not repeat their past errors of overclassification or overgeneralization. Consolidation of ideas by classification into categories should provide representative, workable groups, not isolated facts which can have meaning only in context. Conversely, overgeneralization should not be reduction to statements with no future (because they have no implications for the future).

We understand that the causes of cultural phenomena are human beings, and that culture is manifested in characteristic forms, patterns, and configurations, yet we have failed to explain these "forms" in terms of cause and effect. Perhaps the problem lies in our lack of knowledge about processes of culture: 1.) the constant influence of the past on the present and the future, and 2.) both the determinant and condition (active and passive) roles of culture in social change. (Morrish, 1976, p. 69)

Components of the "Concept of Culture" have been enumerated and some facts have emerged which allow anthropologists to determine: (see next page)

1.) that cultural configurations exist.

2.) that they can be studied empirically.

3.) that these patterns of culture are universal.

4.) that analyzing the processes of culture is more important than identifying the products of culture.

5.) that cultural analysis may prove useful in the understanding and prediction of cultural trends.

Other facts about culture follow, though not presented as a "corpus of theory" they are hopefully a logical flow of ideas from which implications arise and are examined for validity, or are projected and extended by the researcher's thinking.

Culture may be conceived as "a continuum in a constant state of change. . .with an almost unlimited capacity for change." This statement implies that "cultures have no predestined life cycle" and it is a fact that most cultures have never fallen; they have simply taken on a new form or configuration. (Linton, 1936, pp.293-296)

On the continuum of culture we can see that "all the institutions of a society and its culture are interrelated over time." (Rose, 1966, p. 16) Accepting this idea as logical, I believe that the configurations or patterns of culture are related over time and have important implications for consideration as <u>universal</u> patterns of culture.

Along this culture continuum we can observe the constant state of change of configurations and can also identify those aspects which seem interrelated and of primary importance to culture patterns.

These "constants" would be our universals of cultural configurations. If this examination and identification were successful, we could also identify those aspects of secondary and tertiary importance. We could thus eventually achieve the totality of a complete scientific theory of culture.

Observing the changes of cultural configurations, we could also more closely examine the processes of social change. For example, we could study the important social process of conflict through which individuals or groups determine their relationships to one another. Conflict is "one of the major ways in which social change takes place." (Ibid., pp. 57-58) The more accurately the configuration of conflict is understood the more easily will we understand the new relationships which are established.

An example which offers some explanation is that of our traditional societies which are stratified into classes or castes, each with its own amount of power. Power is shifted only through conflict among classes, castes, or on a much less intense level, between individuals. "In an open-class society such as ours, conflict is often replaced by competition." (Ibid., p. 58)

Competition becomes the means by which reward in our society is achieved, but the goals of both conflict and competion are usually identical (e.g., power, prestige, money, education). Understanding the configuration, the process of conflict, we should not only be able to understand why it occurs but should be able to predict the results caused by it.

As an example, through casual observation I have seen, in this

society, the chances for reward through competition seem to become fewer. As more individuals have perceived competition as a less than viable means to achieve power, conflict has become more manifest as it has more visible and often more immediate success.

Culture as a continuum, and as never static, undergoes changes both in conditions and in rates of change. An example of differing rates of change is that between technological advances and "need." Often new developments in technology are marketed before a need has arisen or, as is most unfortunate, developments lag behind need (as in the need for more efficient automobile engines and/or alternative fuels).

The term "culture lag" has been used to describe the lag between a technological change (implementation) and the adaptation of society to the new technology. One wonders if "culture anticipation" could be used to describe the readiness of society for a particular technological advance.

> There is one. . .thing which characterizes all periods of rapid culture growth, and that is that groups seem to be interested in one thing at a time. Culture growth is practically always disharmonic."
>
> (Linton, 1961, p. 666)

This lack of harmony and the centering of group interests can be described by use of current examples: violence, minority problems, a "rootless" society, drug and alcohol abuse, are all manifestations of disharmony. Certainly all exist, even in times of relative harmony, but it is the proportion or magnitude, of the occurences that cause a distinction between disharmony and harmony.

Current "burning issues" such as teacher "burn-out," busing

for integration, the price of gasoline, the feminist movement, all show by both the quantitative and qualitative degrees of attention devoted to each that there is usually one issue of central interest to any individual or group.

Ogburn and Nimkoff state that "much of our contemporary social disorganization issues from the irregular changes of our culture." (cited in Morrish, 1976, p. 71) These changes are due in part to our open-class system, part to our substitution of competition for conflict, and part to the loosely knit culture of our society.

> The more tightly knit the culture, the greater its resistance to change, since even its seemingly casual traits are intimately grounded in its guiding foci or configurations.
>
> (Kneller, 1966, p. 8)

The statement above describes an apparently harmonic society, though its centering on more than one issue at a time is limited to its foci.

Both examples are interrelated in terms of pattern or configuration on the culture continuum. They each represent a different organizational structure yet we are able to analyze both through contrast of their components and by comparison of their values as determined by the configuration.

Our modern society is not only characterized by rapid change but also by a multiplicity of sub-groups.

> When a country has many groups in it, each with its own set of meanings and values (as has the United States), social change is inevitable. Individuals belong to many groups and thus acquire and hold simultaneously different and sometimes conflicting values which they must somehow reconciled.
>
> (Rose, 1966, p. 55)

We thus suffer from such social maladies as "ethnocentricism" by giving too much attention to isolated culture forms of sub-groups instead of recognizing the similarities between cultures as evidenced by universal culture patterns. We must "cure" ourselves by ceasing "to interpret and evaluate the cultures of others by reference to (our) own patterns." (Himes, 1968, p. 76) We must function within universal frames of reference when disunity in the elements of culture cause conflict of directives and objectives. (Musgrove, as cited in Ianni & Storey, 1973)

Cultural identity is usually defined by minority groups and by implications of superiority or inferiority. "With very few exceptions, the lack of internal homogeneity is reflected in a numerical imbalance between members of the different groups that make up that society." (Bochner, 1973, p. 27)

A major reason, other than race prejudice and minority group imbalance, for the failure to recognize similarities between cultures is that our point of view of that which we study has been narrowed and has caused us to form incorrect conclusions. Absolutes are projected based on a narrow and biased foundation of questionable "facts."

Himes sets out steps by which we can move toward greater understanding and achieve greater knowledge of the cultures of others. We are still preoccupied with our own uniqueness and achievements as a nation; we must begin to make a commitment to examining the cultures of others. By not studying the "historical material" of other cultures, we limit ourselves. We cannot "take

a more intelligent and directive attitude" until we can better understand cultural conventions, and until we stop "exalting" those that belong to our nation and decade. (Himes, 1968, p. 9)

"A very little acquaintance with other conventions. . .would do much to promote a rational social order." (Ibid.) We could move ahead if we would substitute realistic thinking for the misleading symbolism of "national" or "blood" heredity. We must focus instead on culture.

"Man is not committed in detail by his biological constitution to any particular variety of behavior," (Ibid., p. 12) as it has been shown since the beginning of history that humans can adopt the cultures of others. If we could become a multi-racial society operating on the principal of cultural pluralism, we would achieve harmony not only through the integration of our society but also through a diversity of choices available for individual life patterns.

This cultural diversity might also assure humankind greater potential for survival as their "variability in approaching the future. . .(could) provide alternative solutions to problems." (Bochner, 1973, p. 31) Therefore, a pluralistic society cannot maintain its culture intact as the elements of social change are built into it. Every particular cultural structure favors evolution in some directions and not in others. (Sapir, 1949, p. 341)

Promoting culture as an abstract concept seems to be the intent of most persons defining culture; yet abstraction causes problems in describing the complex whole. Many parts of culture can be identified when abstracted from the whole, but are often incorrectly

attributed causal characteristics.

It is important to remember that parts do not cause a whole but comprise it. The form of or configuration within the whole may persist while the content changes or is unaltered but organized into new structures (configurations). "In comparison to changes of content of culture the configuration has often remarkable permanency." (Boas, as cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 360) To conclude:

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

The links found between categories and the overlap seen in definitions strengthen the case for the understanding of relationships. They are the flexible glue which holds the parts together and which keep the constantly changing dimensions cohesive.

Relationships allow the anthropologist to determine the configurations of a particular culture. As universal configurations or patterns of culture emerge and are validated by empirical measures, the corpus of culture theory will then exist and inevitably will make possible not only a scientic "Theory of Culture" but also will aid in the formation of a unified science of human behavior.

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